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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · PLP · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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PLP College Conference

Building the Fight vs. Fascism

EAST HARLEM, November 8 — Fascism is imminent, but the future is bright for the working class. Youth are ready to learn and to fight. Progressive Labor Party's College Conference to Smash All Borders helped youth realize their potential to lead a communist revolution.

The conference drew over 80 youth and professors from California, Maryland, Illinois, New Jersey, Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington, DC. This conference was a product of our practice in fighting racist police brutality against black and migrant youth. Throughout a rally through East Harlem, the willingness to fight back under PLP's leadership was evident.

We Don't Just Talk, We Fight

After a day of discussion about fascism and fighting back like Ferguson, we did just that: fight. Fifty protesters began picketing at the corner of a train station on Lexington Ave and 125th Street. The entire rally and march was led by new and young PL'ers and friends. For nearly everyone who volunteered and stepped up, it was their first time making a speech, leading chants, holding a banner, or helping with security. For one student who kept the march disciplined in rows of two, it was his first time at a rally! Everyone learned how to lead on the spot. Our disciplined militancy drew a lot of workers' attention.

We disrupted traffic and marched to the public housing projects with "Hey hey, ho ho! This racist system has got to go!" In June, the cops raided and arrested 39 black workers and youth at the Grant and Manhattanville projects (see CHALLENGE, 11/12). They broke down doors with battering rams, trashed whole apartments, and handcuffed the elderly and children. A comrade who is fighting these fascist terror attacks spoke about the blatantly racist nature of the New York Police Department and called for everyone to pack the courts on November 17, the next court date for victims of the raid. Project residents responded by taking CHALLENGE and putting their fists in the air.

The cops also took notice. Two NYPD cars drove up to our rally, blaring their sirens in an attempt to drown out the chant of "NYPD KKK!" Instead of being intimidated, we chanted louder. More cops followed us for the remainder of the march: at least four cars, two vans, and two detective cars. "Get off the streets!" they shouted. We continued to march. A group of middle and high school students joined us, chanting, "If We Don't Get It, Shut It Down! Ferguson! Shut It Down! Harlem! Shut It Down!"

In that moment we felt powerful. Residents nodded their heads and smiled. The cops did not expect a group of multiracial communists denouncing capitalism in a working-class neighborhood like East Harlem. As we marched, the cops' attention to us reflected just how powerful organized youth and workers can be.



Students lead march of 50 through East Harlem.
Banner from a march against racist cops on a Texas campus.

Fight like Ferguson

The rally would not have been possible without PLP's actions in Ferguson, Missouri, where the rebellion has taught the Party's youth a lot about how to fight. Ferguson demonstrates that black workers are the key to communist revolution. The very foundation of global capitalism is racism. Black youth are hit the hardest, as a measure for the bosses for how far they can go in oppressing and dividing the working class. Militant black workers have served as an inspiration for the international working class, beginning with Haiti, the first country to abolish slavery after a violent rebellion. Ferguson confirmed our communist understanding that anti-racism must be at the forefront of every struggle. This is reflected in the growth of PLP's college work and in our black, Latin, and South Asian leadership.

Internationalism

A woman comrade from Mexico informed the participants about the rise of fascist conditions and the murder of 43 student fighters in Mexico City. Comrades from Haiti and Switzerland sent solidarity greetings. While there are many ruling classes, we see only one international working class. When student fighters in Mexico City are killed, youth in the U.S. should rally on campus, at the Mexican consulate, in immigrant neighborhoods.

In the keynote speech, a student leader from Chicago said, "Police murders of black youth will only intensify and deportations will only increase. But we have to do our part and organize resistance so that we can ultimately follow in the footsteps of that Red Army in the Soviet Union that crushed fascism where it stood. Wherever workers are met with fascism, they are also fighting back. And as revolutionaries we have to throw ourselves into these fights, because we must view every struggle as a school for communism and as a platform to build deeper ties with the working class."

Professors and students have the task of carrying out the lessons from the Conference back to their local areas. We will continue to fight like Ferguson, to be bold and on the offensive against racist violence on our campuses and in our neighborhoods.

Fighting fascism ultimately means building one communist organization of billions across the world. PLP's College Conference sowed seeds for that revolution. We are a fighting organization with tremendous potential to grow among youth. That's why we say our future is bright.✪

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

OUR FIGHT

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✯Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✯Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✯While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Rulers Plan a Future of Wars

The U.S. ruling class has a lot on its plate. Inter-imperialist competition is forcing the bosses to prepare for both smaller, regional wars and the broader world war to come. China, Russia, Japan, and the European Union powers are vying with the U.S. to control oil and other resources and to maximize profits from cheap labor. History shows there is no way to negotiate or cooperate out of these conflicts. They can be solved only by war.

But the capitalists cannot successfully pursue these wars without boots on the ground to do the killing. They must gain loyalty and support from the world's workers — the same workers they need to exploit and brutalize in their racist system (see box).

Most workers today are opposed to the bosses' current dogfights. Even without a mass movement to galvanize them, they understand that capitalist wars cannot serve their interests. Here, then, is the opportunity for communists to turn these imperialist wars into class war — as the Bolsheviks did in Russia during World War I, as the Chinese communists did during and after World War II. Here is our chance to lead the working class in revolution to destroy the profit system. Then we can establish communism, a worker-run system free of bosses, profits, unemployment, poverty, racism, and sexism. That is the goal of the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party.

Regional Wars vs. World War

Should U.S. capitalists continue to invest in regional invasions or keep their powder dry for an eventual World War III? Those are the strategic alternatives framed by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the U.S. imperialists' leading think tank. The latest issue of the CFR's *Foreign Affairs* (November-December, 2014) opens with two opposing pieces: "More Small Wars," by Max Boot, and "Pick Your Battles," by Richard Betts. This is no armchair discussion; these writers are active participants in the bosses' mass murder. Boot advised U.S. commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan, while Betts consults for the CIA and the Army War College. And the CFR itself represents the finance wing of U.S. capitalism, the interests who have most to gain or lose from armed conflict. Among its main backers are ExxonMobil, JPMorgan Chase, and the Rockefeller family.

But this either-or debate is a false formulation. Imperialist war is both inevitable and incremental. As U.S. bosses combat their many overseas rivals, we can expect both kinds of war.

Boot points to more than 30 potential targets for a U.S. invasion, including Syria, Colombia, Iraq, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Ukraine. "Given how many of these conflicts involve U.S. allies or interests, it is wishful thinking to imagine that Washington can stay aloof.... Since Washington doesn't have the luxury of simply avoiding insurgencies, the best strategy would be to fight them better." That, says, Boot, means more ground troops and a greater effort at "nation building," code for long-term military occupation.

In rebuttal, Betts dismisses the slaughter of millions in the Middle East and South Asia by the last four U.S. presidents as "half measures" and mostly failures: "Of the U.S. military actions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, only the first can be counted a success." He concludes:

> *[T]he time has come to focus again on first-order dangers. Russia is back, and China is coming. These prospective opponents could not just hurt U.S. allies; they could inflict epochal damage on the United States itself....Now the United States needs to temper the ambitions unleashed by its post-Cold War dominance [and] to prepare for bigger wars for bigger stakes against bigger powers.*

Oil and ISIS

In response to territorial gains by the Islamic State, Obama is doubling to 3,000 the number of U.S. military "advisers" in Iraq. It's not just Iraq's oilfields, as vast and profitable as they are, that the U.S. capitalists worry about. ISIS seeks "the next step: control of an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea," says industry insider Oil Price (11/4/14).

It continues: "Access to the sea is absolutely crucial to the group's survival as an oil-and-gas-producing state. In recent weeks there have been repeated missile attacks from Islamist forces around Latakia," Syria's main port.

Meanwhile, General John Campbell, Obama's Afghan warlord, posed a parallel question in *Foreign Policy*, another ruling-class journal: "Do...we need more NATO forces in certain locations for longer? I've got to do that analysis and we're just starting that now." *Foreign Policy* answered his question for him: "The Taliban are gaining ground in key districts in the south and east of Afghanistan" (11/8/14).

U.S. Elections Boost Warmakers

Back in the U.S., where liberal Democrats took a beating in the midterm elections, ruling-class media guardedly proclaimed victory for interventionist Republicans over isolationist Tea Party challengers. "Establishment Republicans, who had vowed to thwart the Tea Party, succeeded in electing new lawmakers who are, for the most part, less rebellious" (New York Times, 11/9/14).

Imperialist war hawk John McCain, who advocates a

Continued on page 5

U.S. Bosses' Dilemma: Getting Boots on the Ground

As CHALLENGE has noted (10/29/14), U.S. capitalists are short on real allies in the Middle East, which contains the largest reserves by far of cheaply extractable oil. With only token support from other powers for their assault against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or the Taliban in Afghanistan, they need to step up military recruitment of U.S. youth. The bosses are flooding TV with commercials about "serving your country." They're re-instituting Reserve Officers Training Corps on college campuses, with a special emphasis on grooming more black officers. They aim to reform education to focus more on patriotism and pro-war ideology. In Washington, as a bipartisan war coalition spends more billions of workers' money on war, Barack Obama will pursue "executive actions" to pressure the GOP on immigration reform and other ploys to buy off workers and youth.

But with their system in crisis, U.S. rulers face a dilemma. Nearly seven years after the outset of the "Great Recession," mass racist unemployment persists. Since the capitalist system depends on super-profits from the super-exploitation of black and Latin workers, along with lower wages for women workers, the bosses must ramp up racism and sexism. To divide the working class, they must scapegoat Muslim, South Asian, Arab and Chinese workers, blaming them for the shortage of jobs for black and Latin youth.

Despite the bosses' best efforts, imperialist war is a hard sell. As their police kill and imprison black and Latin youth in cities large and small, from New York and Los Angeles to Ferguson, Missouri, it becomes much harder to recruit them to the military. Desperate to fill their enlistment needs, and fearing a compulsory draft would be too unpopular (at least for now), the capitalists are marketing military "careers" to unemployed black youth and promises of citizenship to undocumented Latin youth. They are even taking small steps to reduce the number of black and Latin youth behind bars, though the U.S. prison population of more than two million is still the largest in the world. (China and Russia, the U.S. bosses' main imperialist rivals, rank second and third.)

Bosses' Election Bust

U.S. workers' alienation may be at an all-time high. In the recent U.S. elections, only 36 percent of eligible voters actually voted, "the lowest it's been in any election cycle since World War II, according to early projects by the United States Election Project" (Washington Post, 11/10/14). The big story in the bosses' media was that the Republicans trounced the Democrats. The real story is that both parties are controlled by the same big business interests that financed the elections. Whatever their differences, both parties are driven by the goal of U.S. imperialists to maintain their top-dog status. And both parties know they must enlist U.S. workers — whether with a "democratic" carrot or a fascist stick — to slaughter their working-class brothers and sisters around the world.

Opposing these ruling-class attacks means organizing workers and youth worldwide to wage class war against the exploiters. A communist party is essential to lead this war. Progressive Labor Party, active in more than twenty countries around the world, is dedicated to that aim. Join and build PLP!

Justice Starts When Capitalism Ends



BROOKLYN NY, October 21 — "We want justice for Kyam Livingston, killed in a Brooklyn cell!" rang out as the Committee for Justice for Kyam Livingston rallied in the Flatbush neighborhood where Kyam had lived. Today's demonstration was bigger than last month's, more neighbors joined the rally and many more watched and listened across the street from the rally or stopped as they exited the nearby subway. Hundreds of leaflets and over 250 CHALLENGEs were eagerly grabbed up by the rush hour crowd.

PLP has supported this fight from the start. We salute the family for their resolute commitment to continuing the struggle against the racist and callous treatment which caused Kyam's death. What does it mean to get justice for Kyam? Can this family or others who have lost loved ones to racist police terror get justice under the rule of capitalism?

For months we chanted "we want the names, we want the tapes." The cops who run Brooklyn Central Booking had refused to provided the names of those who were on duty in the Central Booking jail on July 21, 2013 when they denied medical attention to Kyam until she died. Likewise, they refused to acknowledge that there were video tapes of the holding cell let alone provide copies of them to the family. The months of struggle from the family, the community and the Party on the streets of Brooklyn helped us get that information.

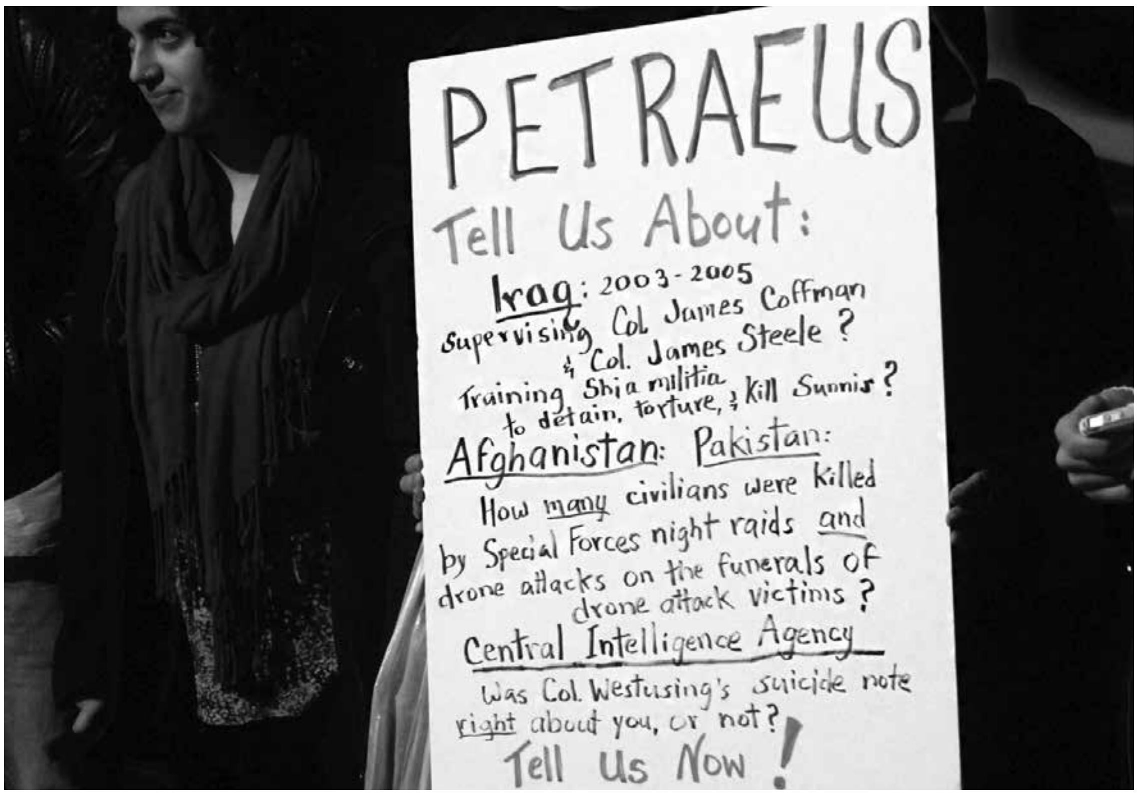
The family has said that they want Brooklyn Central Booking to be cleaned up — to literally clean up the dirt and get red of the vermin — and changing the treatment of those held in the cells. It also means getting rid of those whose actions caused the death of Kyam. This is more difficult, because the atmosphere of the so-called criminal justice system is dictated from the top. The ruling class needs to politically divide the working class and intensify the oppression of black workers, and so wants racist, vicious treatment to be the usual way black workers and especially youth are dealt with by the system. While the cells might be clean for a while or a cop "thrown under the bus" here and there, the ruling class relies on terror here and around the world to make sure they remain in power.

While in some ways Kyam's death was different from other racist police murders because the cops don't even claim that she posed a threat or had a weapon, it is a part of the bigger pattern of racist murders by cops who view the lives of black and Latin workers unimportant and without value.

The main way that capitalists stay in power is by dividing all workers using racism, sexism and nationalism, and especially terrorizing some. In rare cases, some crumb will be thrown to try to pacify the workers, such as an indictment or even conviction of a racist cop. PL'ers have constantly raised the message of fighting for working-class unity to defeat racist police terror and destroying the ruling class, who rely on it for their very existence. We say the only way to win real justice is to destroy the capitalist's system with communist revolution, and in order to get there we must fight back like Ferguson against each and every racist police murder with working class multi-racial unity.✪

Petraeus Out of CUNY

We Won't Fight Your Imperialist Wars



NEW YORK CITY, October 29 — Nearly 30 students, professors and members of a Harlem church protested a talk by war criminal David Petraeus in Manhattan this evening. He was having a "conversation" with conservative NY Times columnist David Brooks, hosted by the Macaulay Honors College of City University New York, which hired the former commander of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and later CIA Director to teach a seminar course.

Last year hundreds of CUNY students and faculty demonstrated against his presence on a regular basis, to the point where he now is surrounded by dozens of NYC cops every time he appears publicly.

We chanted "Petraeus Out of CUNY" and "1, 2, 3, 4, We Won't Fight Your Imperialist War; 5, 6, 7, 8, Petraeus Out, We Won't Wait." The last chant was particularly significant since many of the people in the audience were older, well-dressed business people who would never think of sending their children or grandchildren to the Middle East or Central Asia to risk their lives.

The people from Wall Street who admire Petraeus have big stakes in U.S. wars of occupation: (1) control over trillions of dollars worth of resources (oil and gas in the Middle East, a fortune of precious minerals in Afghanistan); (2) billions in profits from companies that produce the helicopters, jet fighters, tanks, cruise missiles, drones and other weapons; (3) markets for U.S. goods; and (4) profitable investment opportunities for U.S. companies.

So, who does the ruling class think will do the fighting for them? Who will come back in coffins, or with shattered bodies and minds? It will be working-class youth who will die and suffer, as well as inflicting widespread death and pain on those being occupied and attacked. That's why Petraeus is at CUNY, to convince its working-class students to join ROTC, to serve in the military and to politically support the U.S. empire and its crimes. But the people who were demonstrating outside — a diverse group from many countries — aren't buying what Petraeus is selling and have committed themselves to fighting imperialism.

Students spoke eloquently of last year's many struggles at CUNY. A person from a church in Harlem described how NYC cops raided a housing project in Harlem, arresting many young people, which he called an "imperialist attack at home" and called for supporting the arrested youth at their court hearings.

Another speaker pointed out that Petraeus is a war criminal whose death count keeps rising. From 2003-2005, Petraeus was in charge of creating, arming, training and funding Iraqi paramilitary units to crush the Sunni insurgency. These units were formed out of Shia militias, who kidnapped, tortured and killed thousands of Sunnis. That sparked a brutal sectarian war between Sunnis and Shias in 2006, that took the lives of tens of thousands. The victory of the Shias consolidated the rule of Nouri al-Maliki, who in ensuing years did everything possible to antagonize the Sunnis, resulting in the rise of the fundamentalist Islamic state, which now controls much of Sunni-majority Iraq.

Petraeus is currently teaching at Macualy Honors College and is expected to teach again in Spring 2015. The seminar is titled The Coming American Decades, a course that examines how the U.S. and its North American allies can continue to maintain world domination when capitalism is in crisis. The course meets Monday afternoons at 555 West 57th Street. Surely this war criminal deserves another greeting from our students and faculty.

Many students are starting to understand that the problems we face — war, racism, sexism, poverty, unemployment, low wages, global warming — are due to capitalism, and that we need to make a revolution. We distributed CHALLENGE at the rally and are committed to building a revolutionary party to rid ourselves of people like Petraeus and his corporate masters.✪

Fight Like Ferguson Forum: Can There Be A Good Cop?

NEW YORK CITY, October 27 — Bringing home the events and the fightback against racist murder by cops in Ferguson, PLP members helped organize a "Fight Like Ferguson" forum at Hunter College today. The event's purpose was to review the current state of resistance in Ferguson and its dynamics and to discuss concrete methods for linking that resistance to the worldwide struggle against racism.

A three-member panel gave a presentation, followed by questions and discussion. About 30 people from Hunter and other City University colleges attended. PL'ers invited the audience to the 2014 College Conference the following week. Everyone in the audience took CHALLENGE.

The first panelist gave basic information about Ferguson and drew parallels between the violence of police repression and brutality seen there with that of the Israeli state-sanctioned violence seen in Palestine. There was a brief overview of the history of Zionism in the Middle East and its relationship to indigenous and later refugee populations.

Our second panelist had captured live footage of nighttime protests, showing both resistance and police tactics, as well as interviews with members of the Lost Voices collective, a central group of working-class youth involved in organizing and coordinating the protests. After showing 15 minutes of raw footage (to be used in a forthcoming, independently produced documentary) the panelist then discussed connections between the roles of police repression, mass incarceration, and maintaining capitalist exploitation.

The third panelist focused on what can be done to continue to fight. Beginning with a description of living conditions in Ferguson, he continued with anecdotes of being on the ground there, and the different methods used by the resistance to stay ahead of the police and keep up the pressure on them. He also discussed what can tactically be done by people to broaden the resistance to exploitation and racism in a class society. The event formally ended with a general discussion on the content of the panel discussion.

A common theme seen in all of the discussion boiled down to a controversial question: can there be a good cop? Two Muslim South Asians in the audience, a targeted ethnic group on campus and throughout the city by the NYPD, wondered if it's only individual cops or all cops who are racist. Members of the audience were largely divided. Some believed it's possible for individual cops to act ethically; others argued that this can't be. PLP members in the audience and panel pointed out the ideological foundations of policing, and the role that the state apparatus plays in the consolidation and maintenance of power by the capitalists.

Every cop's job is to ultimately protect capitalism: private property, profits, businesses. For the bosses, a good cop is one who terrorizes and kills our class. For the workers, a good cop is a dead cop.

Despite some disagreements during the discussion, there was general agreement that we have to continue to make concrete fightbacks against racist oppression. We will be sure to follow up on the members of the audience to plan more struggles on campus. PLP strives to give leadership to these struggles, and direct them to a communist revolution and a bright, communist future.✪

Three Days of Education and Struggle in DC

WASHINGTON, DC, October 18 — Today, high school and college students concluded three days of study and struggle hosted by the Progressive Labor Party here, raising the commitment of the participants inspired by Ferguson and connecting the fight against racism to the fight for communism. The weekend was also a major advance for our youth leadership in the area, with high school comrades taking the responsibilities upon themselves to lead everything from discussions to demonstrations.

On the first day, PL'ers and friends participated in a forum called "Inequality, Racism, and Capitalism: Advancing the Struggle," sponsored by the Howard University Department of Economics. Over 60 participants, including public housing residents, transit workers and healthcare workers and other workers joined faculty members from Howard University and North Carolina A&T in analyzing mass racist incarceration, gentrification, educational struggles.

There was also a critique of the current best-selling book *Capital in the 21st Century*, by Thomas Piketty, a book being pushed by the liberals because it ignores racism and the need for working-class struggle, cynically arguing for reforms that even Piketty admits are not likely to happen.

The next day, PL'ers met to study dialectical materialism, the philosophy of the working class, as a way of analyzing struggles like that in Ferguson. Comrades who had just returned from the battle in Ferguson showed clips of the struggle there to illustrate some principles of dialectics. Then, on Saturday, the high school PLP leaders met for several hours in a strategy session to plan for a demonstration. This was a new experience, not only for the young PL leaders planning this but for many students this was their first time demonstrating! Everyone agreed that the goal of the demonstration should be to inspire workers and students here in Washington, DC to "fight like Ferguson" and once a plan was made, everyone collectively made signs for a rally.

We marched with our signs and red flags, chanted, and distributed over 200 CHALLENGEs to students, Howard University alumni heading towards the homecoming game, and neighborhood residents.

Our boldness paid off and the response was fantastic — as our march culminated in a rally outside a train station, our chants of "Hands Up, Don't Shoot, Fists Up, Fight Back" were met by almost everyone coming up the escalator raising their hands in solidarity. Our first-time marchers were energized and this rally raised the bar for our work here in DC- everyone returned to their area enthusiastic about continuing the struggle and learning more about the Party's fight for communist revolution!✪

Multiracial Rebellion Terrorizes Rulers

FERGUSON, MO — The capitalist ruling class has been rocked by the protests that have gone on for over two months since the racist police murder of our working-class brother Mike Brown. The rebels have shown creativity in fighting back against police terror, including interrupting baseball games and a symphony performance to keep attention on Ferguson. A group of PLP comrades went to the St. Louis area for the recent protests and are all going back to their areas with new energy and a better political understanding of why the rulers are terrified by this rebellion.

The bosses are using two main tactics to stop the movement: outright fascism, and liberal co-optation. These reflect both a tactical split but also a strategic unity in the ruling class. With the first tactic, fascist terror, the rulers and their police thought they could just beat the fight out of the workers and students in St. Louis County. After weeks of daily protests, they had underestimated the resolve of the protesters who refused to give in to fear and terror, images of which were seen around the world.

Our Party contingent experienced this in a very direct way. On Friday, October 10, riot police with heavy armored vehicles confronted about 150 protesters in St. Louis during a march for another black youth who was recently shot eight times by an off-duty cop after purchasing a sandwich at a convenience store.

After being harassed by police at a march on the following day who demanded our literature and to know why we were there, we were again stopped by St. Louis County police when we entered a predominately black apartment complex in Ferguson to talk to residents. They told us that since the Brown shooting this harassment has stepped up, with St. Louis County police joining the Ferguson police in patrolling the largely black working-class neighborhoods.

Contrary to our assumption that Ferguson residents would be reluctant or even tired of talking to us, the workers and students in the apartments were enthusiastic about talking to us about communism and taking CHALLENGE, with some even giving small donations.

Complementing outright fascist terror, the liberal wing of the ruling class has a more sophisticated – and dangerous — tactic to stop these spontaneous rebellions from turning into a more organized working-class movement: to co-opt the protests and portray themselves as the protectors of the black residents against the racist/fascist police and openly racist white politicians.

After the rulers figured out they could not terrorize the rebels and crush the rebellion with violence alone, they unleashed hordes of liberal misleaders on the protesters, aggressively promoting U.S. nationalism and racial identity politics, particularl, the anti-working class ideas of "white privilege" and "black power." These ideas are an ideological attack on working-class consciousness by dividing our class for the rulers who will need more boots on the ground for larger imperialist wars brewing.

The demand for the indictment of racist cop Darren Wilson is being promoted by the liberal wing of the ruling class in order to diffuse the class anger and prevent a larger rebellion. They want the protesters to settle for a resolution to the situation through the rulers fake injustice system and in doing so restore faith in that system- the same system that murdered Mike Brown.

They especially don't want the young black protesters to believe that the ruling class is all about maintaining super-profits for a few billionaires by exploiting the entire working class.That the rebellion has been so multiracial and has drawn in Asian, Latin, black, and white workers and students from all over, terrifying for the rulers because they see the potential unravelling of their race-based system of rule. Liberal rulers have had some success in promoting the idea to the protesters that only black, Latin, and Asian are beaten, oppressed and killed by the police.

Even as blacks are killed far more in proportion to their population, a plurality of workers shot by the police are white. From 2003 to 2009, there were 1,529 blacks and 949 Latinos killed by the police in the U.S., and 2,036 whites in this same period (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011). Liberal misleaders like those at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice want to reform the police only so the racial disparities don't look as blatant, and so legitimize police violence. Black workers are disproportionately terrorized in apartheid neighborhoods at the same time many working-class whites are also oppressed, but invisibly to the media because their job is to carry on the racist lies of the bosses. Communists don't want equality in police shootings — we want to smash all police terror!

We militantly opposed the liberals through our bold presence at each demonstration, and through our interactions with the other protestors and workers. We approached them sincerely and looked for points of unity in their political understanding in order to move them toward communist ideas.

Crucial to our success was our organization and discipline in discussing and criticizing our efforts in a democratic centralist manner, and applying our lessons to future plans. In spite of battling exhaustion and sickness. This infused our group with tremendous energy.

We held two large discussions, one with interested college students and another with a group of contacts we had made and wanted to discuss our ideas, which led to new friendships, and furthered understanding of our fight.

Our multiracial, immigrant and native-born PLP contingent was itself a visible statement of internationalism. We proclaimed loudly that is impossible to get true justice through this murderous system and only a communist revolution, which overthrows the entire ruling class and their state, can bring true justice. Through our new friends and contacts with the workers and students there, and through our internal experiences organizing and practicing bringing our line to thousands of workers and students, we're closer to that day.✪

Railroad Strike Halted by Union Misleaders

BERLIN, November 8 — Caving in to patriotism and nationalism, the leaders of the German train drivers union, GDL, cut short the national strike that has crippled train traffic, so as not to dampen the November 9th celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The climb-down points up the dilemma faced by rail workers, who without communist leadership are stuck with choosing between two reformist-led unions.

The strike was the largest in the state-owned Deutsche Bahn's 20-year history. The workers' main demands were a 5 percent wage hike and a two-hour reduction in the work-week to 37 hours. The GDL also wants to win the right to represent all train crew members, not just train drivers.

The rival EVG union is run by corrupt, do-nothing hacks, and many conductors and dining car workers have switched to the GDL. Of the Deutsche Bahn's 37,000 train crew members, 19,000 now belong to the GDL.

Eleven conductors gathered in a Berlin café and spoke to reporters. Linda shoved her work schedule across the table and said, "If I wasn't on strike, I'd be doing a 12½-hour shift." Another co-worker, Michael, explains: "We're only supposed to work one 12-hour shift a week, but after that they kill us with 11½-hour shifts." "At the end of the shift," Linda continues, "I wouldn't be home in Berlin — I'd be in Cologne. This strike isn't just about money, it's about being able to have a family life." Her colleagues around the table nodded in agreement.

The GDL has threatened to call another strike if no progress is made in negotiations. Today, only one train in three was running because management was unable to react quickly to the ending of the strike. The strike cost the rail company an estimated 200 million euros ($250 million).✪

Mexico: Thousands Rebel vs. Murderous Ruling Class



Sign read, "What does a country that sows bodies reap? They took away so much that they took away our fear."

MEXICO CITY, November 12 — The disappearance and murder of dozens of students in Ayotzinapa and the execution of 22 students by a military commander in Tlatlaya, in the state of Mexico, demonstrates once again, the murderous nature of the capitalists who control Mexico. The statewide genocide, (more than 120,000 murders and thousands gone missing) inheritance of Calderonism continues to increase with Peña Nieto whose imperialist funders have named him the state's man-of-the-year.

Tens of thousands of students in Mexico City hit the streets calling for a national strike against the terrorism taking place in the state. Today millions believe that the government must go. But they will not leave voluntarily nor passively, we need revolution to get rid of the entire ruling capitalist class, their thugs, its profit system, its markets and all of its institutions.

Mainstream media has claimed that the UN Security Council was notified of the persecution, murder and forced disappearance of the students in Iguala, Guerrero, at the time it was occurring. Similarly, the surviving students of this massacre have written detailed accounts of the genocide perpetrated by the police, in the presence of PGR (office of the attorney general) officials and the CISEN (Center of Investigation and National Security), just like the involvement of military officials about five minutes from where these events were taking place.

It's wasn't just the out-of-control outside groups under orders of a trivial mayor, that the capitalist mainstream media wants the public to believe. The genocide and terror spread by the repressive forces of the state, and the strategies adopted by the ruling capitalist and their imperialist supporters, to contain the discontent of millions of unemployed and poor workers, and the millions of youth without the opportunity of ever obtaining a respectable job.

The mass murders and terror implanted during these past decades respond to the needs of the ruling class to impose low wages and to strip the working class of basic services such as education, healthcare, housing, jobs, and for the exploitation of natural resources like gas, petroleum and minerals. The daily murders relate to the concentration of wealth by the ruling class netting them riches though murdering and impoverishment of millions of workers and their families.

With terror embedded in the entire country, the capitalists intend to stop the rising struggles of the working class, setting an example in sectors like those like in Ayotzinapa, which has been the vanguard of the anti-capitalist struggle for decades.

The use of terror, paramilitary, squadrons of death and hired assassins, shows the political weakness of the capitalists to govern. More often we are seeing large sectors not trusting the electoral politics and capitalist democracy, which have proven to be useless to solve the basic needs of the working class. Just like an Ayotzinapa student said, "they have taken everything, EVEN OUR FEAR," and that's what they are really afraid of.

We needs communist revolution that guarantees the end and not the return of capitalism, a communist society led by and for the workers, based on the equal distribution of wealth that is produced by the working class. Let's make the capitalists shake in fear at the sight of a working-class movement. No more genocide, no more capitalism!✪

Rulers Plan a Future of Wars

Continued from page 2

land invasion of Syria with land forces, will now chair the Senate's powerful Armed Services Committee. With former isolationists Ted Cruz and Rand Paul now in the fold and backing U.S. bombing of ISIS, McCain is aggressively promoting the rulers' war aims around the globe. In collaboration with his fellow Republican chairmen of the Foreign Relations Committee and Select Committee on Intelligence, he'll be banging the drum on "arms for Ukraine's government, examination of our strategy in the Middle East, our assets with regard to Russian President Vladimir Putin in the region, China's continued encroachment in the South China Sea" (*Daily Beast*, 11/5/14).

Obama Unleashed

As chief executive, Barack Obama has the last word on war policy. Contrary to conventional wisdom about lame ducks (presidents completing their term of office and are ineligible to run for re-election) , Obama's war-making powers may be enhanced in his last two years in the White House. The election results will give Democrat Obama greater freedom to side with Republicans on military appropriations.

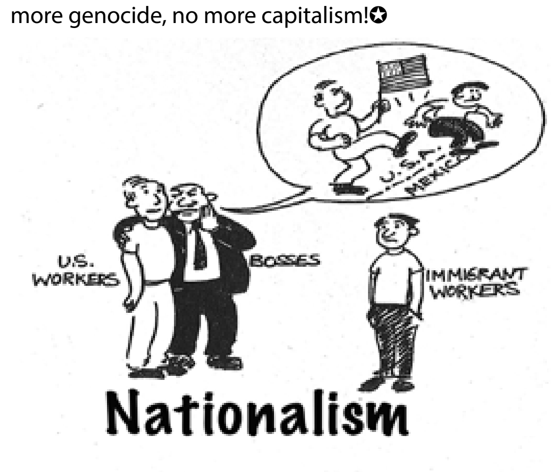
As a historical parallel, the CFR website (11/8/14) cites George W. Bush, who made a number of pro-imperialist moves after GOP voting losses in 2006:

> *….freed from many domestic political pressures -- [Bush] instituted significant foreign policy changes. He fired Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and oversaw a major strategy shift in Iraq, including a troop "surge" and adoption of counterinsurgency doctrine....Looking ahead to the next two years, it's easy to see a similar series of events unfolding....Indeed, President Obama will be free — should he desire — to implement an array of foreign policy "course corrections" via executive action. Obama can unilaterally set a policy regarding the U.S. stance toward Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (something urged by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel). He can revisit the glideslope for U.S. troop withdrawal in Afghanistan, as informally recommended by the general in charge of forces there.*

Even more ominous is Obama's strengthened ability to "correct course" on Russia, whose "military aircraft conducted aerial maneuvers around Europe this week on a scale seldom seen since the end of the Cold War, prompting NATO jets to scramble" (Wall Street Journal, 11/8/14). With gross understatement, a Pentagon spokeswoman said, "We don't think those flights help de-escalate the current situation at all."

China looms as another top target for Obama and his masters. On the eve of the president's upcoming trip to the world's second-largest economy, Nicholas Kristof, the New York Times top China hand, stated (11/9/14), "In tfhe East China and South China Seas, [President] Xi has taken an aggressive approach to maritime disputes. There may be a thaw, but risk remains of military accidents, escalation and even war."

Whatever their differences, in short, U.S. capitalists are displaying greater unity around their central mission: the escalation of inter-imperialist war. Communists have their marching orders too — build the international PLP to smash racism and sexism, and turn imperialist war into class war for communism.✪





LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Standing Up for Communism

A recent experience reaching out to Chicago workers about a police murder has shown me again that communism is strong, and nationalism is weak, and a tool of the bosses.

I went to Polk and California on the west side of Chicago to participate in a community demonstration against the police murder of a young black man two days before. I live only a few blocks away but Ogden Ave has become a dividing line in our area between black families on the north and mostly Latin to the south. I didn't know anyone in that community and didn't know who else from the Party would be there.

I wore my May Day T-shirt from last year, with "Workers of the World Unite!" on it. I had CHALLENGEs and leaflets explaining the events in Ferguson, Missouri. When I got there, before the starting time, there were people sitting on their front porches and sitting and walking along the sidewalk. I offered them CHALLENGE and the leaflet. Almost everyone was hungry for information and analysis. One young fellow began reading the leaflet out loud. I waited as he read the first few paragraphs.

When he got to the line I liked, and which I felt separated us from the liberals, I emphasized it: "that the rebels were not mistaken, they pretty much had their enemies in their sights and met them…" It made me wish that segregation was not so strong in Chicago — it's kept me from having much chance of meeting these people any other way.

After a while, another PL'er and I were confronted by a guy who said he was a Nation of Islam nationalist. He said that he and the black community could never be free following a European style philosophy, and demanded that we stop distributing literature. I challenged this idea, but a local political leader or undercover cop was watching, and I thought they might be setting up an incident. I walked away towards my car, but as I went I continued to hand out literature. The nationalist confronted me again, and I decided that since I had no base on this block, I decided to put my literature away for awhile and see how things developed.

More and more people kept coming. More Party people arrived and some of them began getting out literature as well. This same nationalist fellow confronted one of them like he had me. He talked back like I had but he held his ground and never put away his literature. Speakers started, more people were coming, and we marched to the police station soon after. I went to get my literature and got all of it handed out. People were friendly and glad to see us there and welcomed our class perspective. I liked pointing out the CHALLENGE article on the back page which read, "No Cops, No Crime" about China in the early revolutionary days of the Cultural Revolution.

On our way back to the car, a young mother and her daughter stopped my wife and me and said that they had been trying to get in touch with some group and gave us her email address.

So nationalism is weak. Communism is strong. We have a lot of work to do to win black workers to the Party.

Chicago Comrade

Fighting Cynicism

The feeling of cynicism and apathy, which so commonly afflicts those who understand the path our world is heading for, had me in its grips for a long time. I wasn't losing hope, but I wasn't exactly looking forward to anything either. But when I made the decision to go down to DC (see page 5), to show support for my comrades there, I knew it was the right one. The five-hour bus rides were full of laughs, sleep and serious deliberations on the way back.

I asked the highly technical question: "Why is everyone in PL so… chill?" I'm sure there's a good answer — the type of people who will dedicate their lives to revolution tend to have a deeper understanding of things. Those who are critical of the world around them are probably critical of the sh*t they do. But for now I'm just enjoying the fact that even though some of these people I haven't seen in months, and some of these people I've only just met, there's still the mutual connection it seems only comrades can have.

The political work was sharp. Older comrades did an amazing job of supporting younger leaders. There were a few wrenches in the works, mainly people touting nationalist, black economy ideas. There was also a fire alarm during the panel discussion. It ended wonderfully, with a rally, working-class fists and voices from the neighborhood going up in solidarity.

DC was a place where some new perspective was gained about what it means to organize. From the students there who shared the lessons they've learned, to just getting out and having a rally, it reminded me of what our communist world will look like. As I step back into my capitalist world with increasingly meaningless obligations, that even as I write I'm pushing up against, I'm inspired once more to work towards a communist world that now seems much more possible.

NYC Red Student

CORRECTION

In the November 12 issue, the headline on page 3 "Hundreds Pack Courts Against Racist NYPD Raids" should have read "One Hundred Pack Courts Against Racist NYPD Raids."

Struggles from the Underground

The time has come to address a primary issue that many of us face and which we are silent about. This key issue is how to keep ourselves in line with our principles when facing capitalists in our careers.

As for my experience, I struggle daily with it. I am a part of the capitalist aspect of a non-profit, and I find it very hard to cope when I attend financial conferences and grant meetings. In a room full of the ruling bosses, I feel as though I am injected with toxins as I shake hands with the one percent and politicians. "Wooing" them becomes an objective for me as my goal is geared towards assisting my superiors to recoup funding, or advocating for potential new funding in order to keep our project functioning.

At those moments, I feel as though I have compromised myself and that I am going against our Party's strong core principles. But here is the silver lining for me: the struggles of the workers (both employed and unemployed) who are our clients seeking our help at the non-profit out-weights it all. Seeing how tired and hopeless our brothers and sisters and potential comrades are changes my perspective. Fighting to keep our doors open for our brothers and sisters is the driving force and it prompts me to see this struggle in a new light.

I see this dilemma as working with other comrades in disguise collectively to ensure that the safety nets of the working people remain protected. This is a primary opportunity to share our Party's objective and introduce them to a new way of living.

What has surprised me in my journey during my first year as a communist is how I have been able to reshape the mind of my trusted manager/friend, thus having him express the same shared beliefs without me pushing. Seeing how my manager/friend has evolved as the struggle of the workers at our project has increased, and how his beliefs have change to being somewhat in line with what we believe in is a small victory to the advancement of our Party. It's only a matter of time before we can build a movement that will encourage people to fight for a new society of communism that works for the benefit of all peoples.

La lucha continua! Power to the working people!

Working-class Fighter

End Racism from Belize to the U.S.

The Eric Garner march in August was important to me because it was the first time I was able to be a part of something I was angry about something that's in our community. That was my first time taking a stand and putting it out there that I'm going to fight for what I believe in.

When I was eleven months old my dad was killed by a cop and instead of being treated and instead of calling EMS, they put him bleeding in the back of the cop car and took him to the precinct and let him die. They figured he was just another street kid. My father was 21; he was here in New York while I was still living in Belize.

I lived there until I was sixteen. It's a really beautiful place, a jewel. But in the working-class neighborhoods it's all about gang wars over drugs. The government calls these little "truce meetings" with the leaders of these gangs, take pictures and looks good, and a few days later more people are shot. The cops are all bribed by the gang leaders and you fend for yourself.

Most people work for the tourist industry. Others work in the banks. Other people make extra money carving beautiful wooden statues of our national bird out of wood to sell to the tourists. Opportunities for education are bad and it comes down to money. In high school I wanted to study biology and chemistry to become a doctor, and I realized that only the rich can do that.

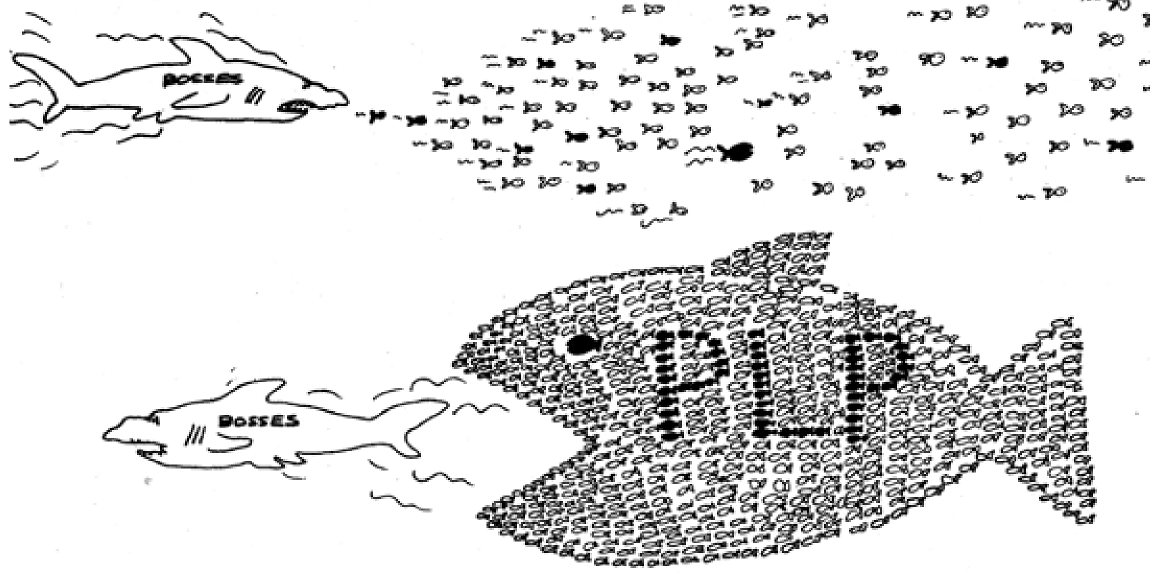
There's no healthcare in Belize. Most people take the two-hour bus ride to Mexico to the hospitals near the border. Poor people have to go there because the Belizean dollar is stronger than the Mexican peso. Forget about it during a medical emergency, and every child grows up knowing to not go to the hospitals in Belize because they're for the rich.

Racism is in Belize in every way possible, and when I came to the United States it was a shock because I thought it would be completely different, but it's just the same. In Belize, politicians tell people what they want to hear and make promises, and have these puppets come to the neighborhoods where people are outraged and calm everyone down and to trust the government, just like after Eric Garner. After a police or gang shooting the cops claim to be "interviewing" the suspects they arrest but they're all on the payroll and their mentality is, "Let them all kill each other so we don't have to do anything." It's just like how the NYPD treated my father.

I used to think I would never go back because there is nothing for me there. Belize is such a small country, and it's like no one else in the world cares about what's going on there. How can you live in a place where every day you don't know if you're going to die or not, if you or your kids can just walk outside into a crossfire? But I see what's going on everywhere and it makes me angry, and people in Belize need to know there's an organization fighting back. Now I would go home and see if I can make a difference.

I'm excited to go with the Progressive Labor Party to Ferguson if I can. I don't think people in Belize know that there are places where people are fighting back. For me, Ferguson would be an experience to see people standing up and fighting instead of being divided and struggling alone.

EMT from Belize



Why do we need the Party?

Blacklisted
Communist Movement Must Create Its Own Culture

Blacklisted by G.A Davis is a novel and a mystery…. but really, it's much more. As its sub title says, it focuses on "A Family Targeted by McCarthy." It's about working-class people and their community. It's an exciting read for those who know about this period as well as for those who've never heard of McCarthy's anti-communist witchhunts.

BUT…this is a novel, not an historical text. The central character and narrator is a high school student, 15-year-old Josie, who grew up in a left-wing, political and active union family.

Josie's Uncle Victor is a public figure in post-war Seattle, a long-time union organizer and fighter for the working class of every heritage, "race" and ethnicity. The novel takes place in the early 1950s when Victor is subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC.) The family is under intense FBI harassment. Unexpectedly, Victor dies in suspicious circumstances.

From then on, the novel's main tension is Josie's search for answers. How and why did her Uncle Victor die? Where is his missing death certificate? She emerges as an independent and critical thinker.

Josie's family is interwoven with hundreds who respected them and acted on that respect as the family crisis grows. As Josie says "Seattle is a small town":

- There are union officials and active members who are integrated in the family's life and help protect Josie from the police and FBI.
- Mrs. Fujimoto, the vegetable seller at the market, refuses to take money from Josie's Aunt. It's "a donation to Victor." Turns out, Josie's Aunt and Mrs. Fujimoto have discussed the Japanese internment and the confiscation of the Fujimoto family farm during World War II.
- Josie meets international figures like Paul Robeson as he sings at the border of the U.S. and Canada in 1952.
- Josie also moves in a teenage world of high school friends, flirting and love interests. She goes to parties and sneaks into dance halls. She and her circle identify with emerging blues, jazz and early spoken word. She helps organize her friends to ridicule the principal at Garfield High for his racism.

Blacklisted is engaging on every level: characters, culture, mystery, relations among family and friends and historical context. The story helps the reader figure out what created these folks. It lets you see for yourself contradictions in individuals and society when massive pressure comes down from the government apparatus to try to maintain the existing order.

Historical Background

Blacklisted presents a political, social and cultural fabric of Seattle after World War II. The strands were created in the 1920s and 1930s. That was a period of battles for unionization among longshore, logging, cannery and other workers. There were fights against Jim Crow racism and for integration. There was a general strike in Seattle in 1919 and a movement to stop ships transporting arms to the enemies of the Russian Revolution. Internationalism, the fight for socialism and against fascism were real in peoples' lives. Cultural change such as WPA (Works Progress Administration) murals, blues, jazz, and be-bop bubbled up from below in the post-war spread of African American culture.

These were battles where immigrant and U.S.-born members of the IWW (International Workers of the World) and the Communist Party of the USA played both leading and rank-and-file roles. Josie's family lives in this context. Their life is made from this whole cloth.

What You Do Counts

PLP members and friends could introduce *Blacklisted* to a wide audience. It could be great reading for social studies, literature, sociology, labor or other classes in high school and college. Readers can learn much about a period omitted from the history books while engaging in the lives of people struggling for equality and a better life.

You can read *Blacklisted* to find out that "What you do counts," counts in big ways like class struggle that challenges existing power relations and counts in smaller, less known, ways like how you live your life and immerse yourself with others. This book helps you imagine just who you can count on when you participate in the struggle for a more collective, communist world. It's a breath of fresh air in today's mass culture of cynicism.

As the title says, this is a story about your family, your neighbors, your coworkers and fellow students; people fighting back against massive attack. This story won't be embraced in mainstream culture. We have to create our own. So, read and distribute the book.✪

Who was Senator McCarthy? What is a Blacklist?

Senator Joseph McCarthy held hearings in the 1950's to "root out" communists from government, culture and, most importantly, the union movement. After World War II U.S. capitalism was booming. Senator McCarthy and the rest of the government security apparatus were trying to destroy or subvert any struggles to upset profits and U.S. world domination.

The term "blacklisted" goes way back in labor struggles. Employers or governments circulated names of those who should not be hired because they were "troublemakers."

Why McCarthyism? The U.S. working class had rebelled on the job and in the streets for decades leading up to WW II. Some were talking revolution. U.S. rulers feared their potential strength. The then socialist Soviet Union inspired millions worldwide as it smashed the Nazis and admired the leadership of communist parties in fighting fascism. The Communist Party of China established the People's Republic of China in 1949.

While the U.S. "Left" bowed down to McCarthy's fear campaign, PL'ers challenged their offensive against workers' movements by attacking capitalism and its imperialist war in Vietnam.

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Profits and racism killed Ebola vaccine

NYT, 11/4 — The leader of the World Health Organization criticized the drug industry…, saying that the drive for profit was one reason no vaccine had yet been found for Ebola….

Dr. Margaret Chan, the director general of the W.H.O….said her organization had long warned of the consequences of greed in drug development and of neglect in public health.

In the midst of the Ebola crisis, she said these two arguments have fallen on deaf ears for decades….

The Ebola virus was discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo, then known as Zaire, in 1976. But because it was confined to impoverished African countries, Dr. Chan said, there was no incentive to develop a vaccine….

"A profit-driven industry does not invest in products for markets that cannot pay," she said.

U.S. justice Guantánamo style: torture, incorporated

NYT, 11/1 — Jihad Abmed Mujustafa Diyab has been a…detainee at the prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, since 2002. In 2009, the Guantánamo Review Task Force ruled that he was not a threat to national security and could be released. Yet…five years later…Diyab is still imprisoned…having never been tried, or even accused of a crime, and with no idea when — or if — he'll ever get out….Last year…he and many other detainees began a hunger strike….

…Twice a day, the government used…force-feeding….which one of Diyab's lawyers, Jon Eisenberg, described…as a "highly orchestrated procedure."

"A five-man riot squad in complete armor pins the guy to the floor, shackles him and carries him out." Eisenberg says. Then the detainee is strapped into a restraint chair — which the prisoners have dubbed "the torture chair." One soldier holds the detainee's head, while another feeds a tube into his nose and down to his stomach. It is very painful to endure….

A three-day hearing…earlier this month….was to decide whether the military's methods for force-feeding detainees was a form of torture.

One…who testified…,Steven Miles, a professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota, said it's not even a close call. He was…horrified to discover that the government had been lubricating the tube with olive oil instead of a water-soluble lubricant…."Some of the lubricant can drop into the lungs," he said [and] can cause an inflammatory reaction called lipoid pneumonia….

After listing a half-dozen other ways the government's force-feeding violated medical protocols, he concluded: "They turned it from a medical procedure to a penal strategy dressed up to look like a medical procedure. The procedures look nothing like medicine."

U.S. Afghan opium reduction program: a $7.6 billion flop

NYT, 10/27 — Over the last dozen years, the United States has poured $7.6 billion into combating Afghanistan's opium production, and the…program failed…. The uncontrolled opium trade…provides the Taliban with up to $155 million annually….

…The special inspector general…assessing…[the] program said: "By every conceivable metric, we've failed. Production and cultivation are up, interdiction and eradication are down, financial support to the insurgency is up, and addiction and abuse are at unprecedented levels in Afghanistan."

….The problem…appears to be getting worse….

The value of last year's yield was $3 billion, up from $2 billion in 2012….One province, Nangarhar, was declared "poppy-free" by the United Nations in 2008, but between 2012 and 2013, it had a fourfold increase in production.

Reversing global warming? Not under capitalism

NYT Book Review, 11/9 — [Review of "This Changes Everything — Capitalism vs. the Climate"] "There is still time to avoid catastrophic warming,…but not within the rules of capitalism…."

…Neoliberalism has encouraged mega-mergers, trade agreements hostile to environmental and labor regulations, and global hypermobility, enabling a corporation like Exxon to make "more money last year than any company in the history of money….The carbon giants continue to reap $600 billion in annual subsidies from public coffers… [and] a greater subsidy: the right…to treat the atmosphere as a "waste dump…."

[The author] reserves a special scorn for the partnerships between Big Green organizations and Immense Carbon, peddled as a win-win for everyone. Such partnerships remind us that when the lamb and lion lie down together, only one of them gets eaten.

…Driven by lobbyists, donors and plutocrats, the giant polluters are going to win…."Our economic system and our planetary system are now at war."

Ras Baraka: Newark's New Leader for Fascism



Newark high school students take to the streets in April 2014 in response to racist cutbacks

In May 2014, Ras Baraka was elected mayor of Newark, New Jersey. Many workers here, particularly black workers, saw this as a step forward in the fight against racism and toward the liberation of the working class. But diverting workers' energy into electing anyone to office, no matter how "left" they may seem, is a recipe for selling out the struggle to smash racism and exploitation. Whether the bosses' local figurehead is Baraka in Newark or Bill DeBlasio in New York City, the bourgeois electoral system is controlled by the capitalist class. We can't elect our way to a society that serves workers' needs. Only a communist revolution can smash the bosses' class tyranny.

Ras Baraka is no stranger to Newark politics. He is the son of recently deceased Amiri Baraka (formerly Leroi Jones), a famous poet and critic and a very popular local figure. Ras Baraka first ran for mayor in 1994, when he was 24. He was elected to the Newark Municipal Council twice and was appointed deputy mayor by the openly corrupt and now disgraced Sharpe James administration.

In 1971, Amiri Baraka was a key figure in the nationalist National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana. One of the goals of the NBPC was to elect black politicians, including Kenneth Gibson, Newark's first black mayor. The elder Baraka later regretted his endorsement of Gibson and proclaimed himself a Marxist-Leninist. But this contradicts the fact that he never broke with nationalism. In 2008, he justified his support of Barack Obama as part of the struggle for a "people's democratic united front" against Republican Party-led fascism. He attacked those who — like Progressive Labor Party — saw Obama as the main danger to the working class, calling them "infantile" leftists.

How Booker and Christie Elected Baraka

Ras Baraka's campaign slogan was, "When I become mayor, you become mayor." He beat Shavar Jeffries, who was backed by the same Wall Street interests and school reform organizations that elevated U.S. Senator Cory Booker, a former Newark mayor. Booker, a strong supporter of charter schools, teamed with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and Facebook billionaire Mark Zuckerberg to devise the secret "One Newark," a plan to privatize the state-controlled Newark public schools and close many of them in the process. Christie then appointed Cami Anderson, a reform hack, as superintendent of Newark's schools.

In 2013, mass anger against the racist profiteers making a bundle off of One Newark turned into a mass campaign involving students, parents and teachers. By the time Booker was elected to the U.S. Senate, many Newark residents saw through him. They understood that both Booker and Jeffries were bought-and-paid-for servants of Zuckerberg, local bosses like Prudential Insurance, and the hedge fund managers behind the latest education reform scheme.

Christie told Newark residents that he didn't "care about the community criticism" of Cami Anderson because "[w]e run the school district in Newark, not them" (Newark Star-Ledger, 9/5/13). Many were furious at Christie's arrogance and the blatant racism behind mass school closings. Baraka's campaign exploited this anger to push to regain "local control" of the schools. As the principal at Newark's Central High School and city councilman for the South Ward, Baraka became a leader of the struggle to stop One Newark. Campaign ads touted him as the mayor who would "stand up" to Christie.

Capitalist Baraka's Lies

Toward the end of the mayoral campaign, in response to several high-profile local shootings, New Jersey's acting attorney general announced the deployment of dozens of state troopers in Newark, as requested by the city's acting mayor, Luis Quintana. According to the Star-Ledger (4/17/14), the move "was met with praise" by both Jeffries and Baraka. A similar deployment in Irvington, New Jersey, had led to increased harassment of black workers, including more frequent use of stop-and-frisk.

After getting elected, Baraka revealed that Booker had left the city with a significant budget deficit. Baraka used this crisis as an excuse to approach Christie about increased state aid for Newark. Of course, any money forked over by Christie comes with strings attached. According to a spokeswoman for the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, "It appears the City is requesting [state] supervision" of the city budget" (Star-Ledger, 7/20/14). Baraka told the Star-Ledger: "We gonna do a little Martin Luther King. We gonna wear [Christie] down with love."

This fall, when parents and students organized a schools boycott to stop One Newark, Baraka told them he couldn't be a cheerleader for the boycott. When students organized by the Newark Students Union sat down in the street in front of Anderson's office, the Newark cops (who answer to Baraka) arrested and injured a student leader who had chained herself to a light pole.

Among the organizations supporting the schools boycott is New Jersey Communities United (NJCU), a liberal group tied to union leadership. At the height of the mass struggle against One Newark last spring, NJCU called on students and others to redirect their energies into the Baraka mayoral campaign. Instead of organizing the fired-up masses into direct confrontation with the racist capitalist system promoted by Anderson, Booker and Christie, the Baraka campaign dissipated that anger.

Baraka's platform of restoring "local control" promotes the illusion that workers can curb racism under capitalism. For the working class, nothing less than violent revolution to overthrow capitalist dictatorship can bring an egalitarian, anti-racist world.✪